



# State of Utah

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
DIVISION OF OIL, GAS AND MINING

S/047/067

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September 2, 2003

TO: Minerals File

FROM: Paul Baker, Senior Reclamation Biologist 

SUBJECT: Site Inspection, Duchesne County Cedar Buttes Mine and Robert Fausett Cedar Buttes #1 Mine, M/047/028 and S/047/067, Uintah County, Utah

Date of Inspection: August 14, 2003  
Time of Inspection: 12:00-1:30 p.m.  
Conditions: Partly cloudy with thunderstorms in the area, 80's  
Participants: Doug Jensen and Paul Baker, DOGM. Doug Nielsen of Duchesne county met us along the road near the mine, but he did not accompany us on the inspection.

### Purpose of Inspection:

I had not been to this site and wanted to see it. In addition, I received a telephone call from Robert Fausett some time ago indicating there might be some safety concerns with Duchesne county's highwall.

### Getting to the site:

In the town of Whiterocks, there is a paved, east-west road just north of a playground, but there is no sign indicating the street name. This is the most major east-west road in the town. Follow this road east and turn left (north) on 5500 East heading toward the mouth of Whiterocks Canyon. Follow this road for 4.7 miles and turn left for 1.5 miles across the Whiterocks River to another road that heads north. One mile from this junction is a gate where we parked. The mine sites are about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile beyond the gate.

### Observations:

The mine sites are located near the boundary of the Ashley National Forest just south of the mouth of Whiterocks Canyon about 1400 feet from the Whiterocks River. As far as we could determine, there is no actual mining taking place in the permitted area for Robert



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Fausett. Instead, material is brought from Duchesne county's mine then processed in Mr. Fausett's area. Equipment in Mr. Fausett's area included a front end loader, screening equipment, and some vandalized trailers (Photo 4).

Also in Mr. Fausett's area was an underground storage area with an unlocked door. Inside were two empty dynamite boxes.

Although most of the disturbances for the two sites were on the west side of the county road, some equipment, including a trackhoe, was being stored on the east side of the road. We were unsure whether this equipment belongs to Mr. Fausett and whether it was being used as part of the mining operation.

Photos 1 through 3 show the highwall and pit in the Duchesne county area. Material that might be used to backfill the highwall is mostly to the east and south of the highwall and pit although immediately east of the pit is a rock outcrop (right side of Photo 3). To the south of the pit, the material looks as if it might serve as an acceptable substitute topsoil.

Mr. Nielsen expressed concern that Mr. Fausett might be doing some mining within Duchesne county's area which he is apparently not supposed to do. We looked for but could not find any evidence of recent mining activity, including tire tracks leading up one of the roads to the pit.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations:**

If either of the operators intends to store explosives on site, they must be kept in a properly secured, locked, grounded container. Explosives must only be stored and used with established protocols from the Mine Safety and Health Administration and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

If the equipment on the east side of the county road is being used for the mining operation, it should be consolidated with the rest of the equipment rather than being spread out over a large area. If this area on the east side of the road was included with the rest of the disturbance for the small mine, the acreage might approach five acres.

There is some trash that should be cleaned up in the Robert Fausett small mine area. I suggest that some of the vandalized items be taken off the site.

Mr. Nielsen said the county is no longer interested in mining their portion of this area and that they would be willing to transfer the permit to another entity. If that is not possible,

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they want to reclaim their disturbed area. The mineral rights for the area were held by Esther Fausett who has now passed away, so it appears they are now held by her four children. Two of these children live in LaPoint not far from the mine, and I will write them in an attempt to determine whether they have interest in obtaining Duchesne county's permit. If they are not interested in the permit or if they are not able to obtain a reclamation bond, they will need to allow Duchesne county right of entry across the Fausett property so the county can perform the required reclamation.

PBB:jb

cc: Robert Fausett, operator

Doug Nielsen, Duchesne County

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## ATTACHMENT

### Photographs

M/047/028 and S/047/067, Cedar Buttes Mine, Duchesne County and Robert Fausett

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**Photo 1. Overview of the highwall at the Duchesne county site.**



**Photo 3. Pit at the base of the highwall.**



**Photo 2. Closer view of the highwall.**

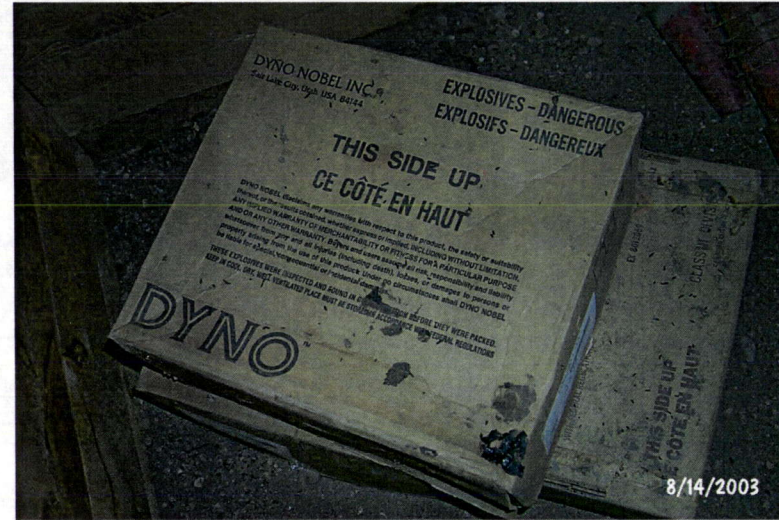


**Photo 4. View of the portion of the site permitted by Robert Fausett.**





**Photo 5. Underground storage area in the area permitted by Robert Fausett.**



**Photo 6. Dynamite boxes (empty) in the storage area shown in Photo 5.**